

**SUMMARY OF THE
QUALITY SYSTEMS COMMITTEE MEETING
DECEMBER 9, 2002**

The Quality Systems Committee of the National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Conference (NELAC) met on Monday, December 9, 2002, at 1 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time (EDT). Chairperson, Mr. David Mendenhall of the Utah Department of Health led the meeting. A list of action items is given in Attachment A. A list of participants is given in Attachment B. *The purpose of the meeting was to receive reports from the ISO and PBMS committees and updates on assignments conducted by committee participants, to discuss new business including evaluating the outcome of the NELAC 8i meeting in Santa Fe, NM, deactivating subcommittees, and the future of the Quality Systems Committee under NELAC.*

INTRODUCTION

Mr. Mendenhall called the meeting to order and conducted a roll call of those in attendance. He asked for comments on the summary of the proceedings from the October 7, 2002-teleconference. The summary was approved with no comments or changes noted by the participants.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

ISO

Mr. Robert Di Rienzo reported that the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) Subcommittee met during NELAC 8i and that all went well. He also noted that per comments received, Section 5.5.6.2.1.b which concerns calibration certificates, will be moved to the section addressing support equipment. Mr. Di Rienzo also reported that future subcommittee calls will be cancelled.

PBMS

Dr. Wilson Hershey deferred reporting on the Performance-Based Measurement System's (PBMS) presentation from NELAC 8i to those who attended the meeting. Mr. Mendenhall noted that as a result of the comments received during the meeting, PBMS will be a big task for the next few months and that a meeting is scheduled for sometime in January 2003; a specific date has not been set.

OLD BUSINESS

Homework Updates

Mr. Mendenhall requested that participants document their reports and e-mail them to the committee. The committee continued to review the items listed in the tracking table and noted that items 1 (new or reconditioned instruments), 22 (comments on PBMS draft), 29 (change to PBMS text), 49 (calibration and laboratory certificates), and 61 (PBMS language) have been completed. Item number 50 will be revisited after the Ninth NELAC Annual Meeting (NELAC 9). Mr. Mendenhall will check with Mr. Jeffrey Nielsen concerning items 52c and 54. He will

also check the file for a response from Mr. Dominic Ruschmna on item number 56. If no response is found, Mr. Mendenhall will send the comment to him again. A participant noted that for item 60, comments were sent, however, he is uncertain as to whether they were received by Mr. John Stanley. The comments will be redistributed to the committee for consideration of supporting the wording. The item will be discussed during the next teleconference.

NEW BUSINESS

New Homework Assignments

Mr. Charlie Hooper will lead the assignment for item 63 (Chapter comments); assistance will be provided by Dr. Wilson Hershey. Ms. Lisa Doucet, Dr. George Kulasingam, and Dr. Pete De Lisle will address item 64 (number of technical personnel), Ms. Betty Boros-Russo, item 65 (sample cooling requirements), and Mr. Mendenhall and Dr. Kulasingam items 66a through 66c (clarification of intent, documenting client approval, and nonstandard methods). A participant stated that he believed that the PBMS subcommittee should address item 66c. Dr. Hershey explained that the PBMS subcommittee believes that other than improving on what it has already prepared there is not much more the subcommittee could do for this item. Further, that if the discussion requires new information, another group will need to take up the task. A question was raised that if PBMS requires more work, could it still be brought up for voting. An affirmative response was provided by Mr. Mendenhall.

Evaluation of NELAC 8i

The general consensus was that although comments received during NELAC 8i were numerous, the meeting went well. It is believed that the concepts of PBMS, with work, will go well. The participants also noted the confusion associated with the availability of multiple documents (i.e., the one given out at the meeting and the document provided online). It was suggested that for future meetings the entire chapter with all proposed changes be made available. A participant also noted that the proceedings should generate numerous comments for the next annual meeting.

The meeting continued with brief discussions on pulling PBMS out into a separate section or appendix. A participant commented that if there are statements open to interpretation they need to be changed. It was suggested that the committee's approach to the January meeting should be to clearly state their views on separating the section.

Mr. Mendenhall discussed briefly commentators from NELAC 8i who supported strict use of ISO language and his presentation concerning auditable language. He noted that his general thoughts were that the meeting was productive and that they needed to get a product out that can be voted on in June.

Inactive ISO Subcommittee

Mr. Di Rienzo stated that the NELAC Standard is in place and that the subcommittee will be deactivated. He will send the subcommittee participants a "thank-you" message and also let them know that, with minor changes, the NELAC Standard is going forward.

Future of PBMS Subcommittee

Dr. Hershey stated that they are willing to bring the NELAC Standard forward to the January meeting, however, the Quality Systems Committee will have the responsibility of addressing comments.

Radiochemical Subcommittee

Mr. Di Rienzo commented that he will be in contact with Dr. John Griggs and that a meeting is scheduled for Wednesday. Beginning in January 2003, the subcommittee will meet through biweekly teleconferences. They expect to have a product ready for the Quality Systems Committee some time in March 2003.

Mr. Mendenhall asked that RTI let the Quality Systems Committee know the due date for submitting chapters for publication prior to the meeting in June 2003.

Call Schedule and Which Hat to Wear

Mr. Mendenhall asked the participants for input on the scheduling future teleconferences for twice per month. He noted that there is a backlog of comments from NELAC 8i and that there have been discussions concerning moving the Quality Systems Committee to the Institute for National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation (INELA). He also noted that with a move to INELA, the committee would lose support from the EPA and consequently contractor support scribing the teleconferences. Mr. Mendenhall also stated that Mr. Di Rienzo had found a conference calling system that could be suitable for their needs.

Mr. Mendenhall confirmed the understanding noted by a participant that the committee would remain under NELAC until the close of NELAC 9. He also commented that he was not sure of the level of support they would receive for teleconference lines and contractor support. It was further suggested that the committee continue with the current support mechanisms for as long as they are available. Another participant voiced the opinion that scribing the teleconferences could be handled fairly well by the committee participants. After a query concerning the length of time for teleconferences, the general consensus was that they should continue with the current 2-hour period. The committee decided to cancel the call scheduled for December 23, 2002. Mr. Mendenhall will contact NELAC concerning the dates for the upcoming teleconferences. If the time slot is available, the next teleconference will be scheduled for 1 p.m., January 13, 2003.

INELA Quality Systems Committee

The participants decided to put a meeting under INELA on hold until after the current product is sent to RTI for publication. Mr. Mendenhall commented that he will be rotating off of the Quality Systems Committee.

OPEN DISCUSSION

Mr. Mendenhall asked for comments on the committee's voting strategy. None were forthcoming. He stated that he will contact everyone concerning the expected schedule for calls.

**ACTION ITEMS
QUALITY SYSTEMS COMMITTEE MEETING
DECEMBER 9, 2002**

Item No.	Action	Date to be Completed
1.	Mr. Mendenhall will check with Mr. Jeffrey Nielsen concerning items 52c and 54.	December 10, 2002
2.	Mr. Mendenhall will check the file for a response from Dominic Ruschmna on item number 56. If no response is found, Mr. Mendenhall will send the comment to him again.	December 10, 2002
3.	Mr. Di Rienzo will send the ISO subcommittee participants a "thank-you" message and also let them know that, with minor changes, the NELAC Standard is going forward.	December 10, 2002
4.	Mr. Di Rienzo will redistribute the comments concerning the use of surrogates to the committee for consideration of supporting the wording.	December 10, 2002
5.	Mr. Mendenhall will contact NELAC concerning the dates for the upcoming teleconferences.	December 10, 2002
6.	Mr. Di Rienzo and the Radiochemical Subcommittee will have a product ready for the Quality Systems Committee some time in March 2003.	March 31, 2003

**PARTICIPANTS
QUALITY SYSTEMS COMMITTEE MEETING
DECEMBER 9, 2002**

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